Vol. IV AUTUMN, 1935 No. 4

# SMOKE

Editor

Susanna Valentine Mitchell

Assistant Editors

David Cornel DeJong Edward North Robinson

Providence, Rhode Island

Wm. R. Brown Co., Printers
33 Eddy St., Providence, R. I.

# *Bat Out of America*

Out of the salty blue wind,
out of the continent,
when, blaze-white,
the first fishermen's boats were sighted
as flecks just larger than wave-crests
dipping and rising,
the bat like a moth like a swallow
like a whirring toy alighted
on the roof of the covered deck, its dark claws clutching
the sea-dustless iron girder. A pulsating thing
brown and soft it was, and small as a mouse.

I watched it cling
blind in lost flying.

Then out of the crowd
a hand cupped and turned over, pried it loose, a hand
slow and thick and clean. The groups surged, stumbling
over bags and deck-chairs. Then:
"Land!
Land!"

The crowd moved to the west rail.

A few stayed, watching; the hand tightened, the pale
mouth was forced open. The sound, too high
for human ears came forth.

Oh, it was then that I
matched its scream . . its terrible silent scream
with my heart's inaudible cry!

Ethel Turner

## *To A Wood Thrush*

Singing across the orchard
in the stillness
before night, answered
by another from the depths
of the wood, inversely
and in a lower key—

First I tried to write
conventionally praising you
but found it was no more
than my own thoughts
that I was giving. No.

What can I say that would
be wise enough or that
we share enough alike for
them to know you? Vistas
of delight waking suddenly
before a cheated world.

## *Antique Engine*

Six whittled chickens
on a wooden bat

that peck within a
circle pulled

by strings fast to
a hanging weight

when shuttled by the
playful hand

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

# *Manhattan Ferry*
## *Oct. 16 1935*

Unhaltered now, our boat: we flow toward what?
no promise, no beginning but the sea,
the wind, the pulsant of each sound, the chain's
metallic run of deck, the breathing tide.
the wild high-treasoned voice of shriven birds
that thread the harbor sky in clean departures.

And pyrric starts, a teeming divination
thrills the ganglia and iron thighs,
as horns occur though engine traps and doom
the jointed corridors of eastern street;
at times that martyred sound will find your thought,
a haunted rumor of our Entropy.

We flow toward what? exalted interludes
of chaos, searing tensity of spires,
the undefined embattlements of warehouse,
docks centurial beneath decay?
the water themes our unrepose: our Poem?
a chanted moment passing is our Poem.

We reach some alien bulkhead, wheels reversed
and power bled on air, our hunger spent,
our hope exhausted with the choking pump,
our eyes outraged by jarring certitudes;
we hear the wonder seeping from the mind
as leaden cars collide into our dream.

ALBERT FRIEDMAN

# *Monologue With Goucher*

There was but one light—in the corner—and Goucher sat under that,
his nose humped like a mountain, his hands clenched and unclenched,
his chin forever pointing to his knees,
his mouth pouring scorn upon my hopes,
filming with oil the fury of my dreams.
I clinked the nearly-emptied bottle to my glass,
set both unsipped to the floor again—for Goucher
no longer drank the liquor he could not buy,
and I must listen while he talked: he was weak
as he was sharp and breakable, like a quartz-sliver,
puzzling while he was transparent.

"You talk of love, you have begun to doubt
your heroics under arms (like those of Tristram),
can't place the force outside you, strong as a potion
to sweep you to follies—can't content yourself
with your own perception? Egad, that's beauty
in the minds of the young!
There is one girl, Pygmalion, loved by statue-critics
and devotees of mind. Fairness is fair enough in others:
are there no ankles, fingertips on living women
to catch the gleam of light to flesh? What of hair
cut short before it sweeps forever—what of promise?"

Let the fool rave, my glass said against my teeth,
I swished the drink to my gullet, comforted, though it had less taste
Goucher bulged his eyeballs, perfectly sober:

"You're happy without compromise; you'll get
no place without it. Take the advice of a failure always,
for he knows what his lack has done him, what owning's worth.
You, artist by a small delusion, wrench
sense into art—that's sense away from sense;
for humans don't want ghouls at their banquets,
philosophy with their drink."

I drained the bottle while his discomfort purred.

# SMOKE

"Tell 'em of Cleopatra, arrayed like a jewelry-shop,
they don't care if Shakspere's the bowing clerk;
or if Homer was a blind page tying on Hector's armor.
If the immemorial goddess out of a Ziegfeld show
holds you tight to her bosom, lifting you to fame,
don't squirm; remember the great man is a babe
gooed at by mothers, kissed by the sentimental, changed
of wet discomforts when he bawls. That's glory—
tell yourself you don't want it when you hunger,
and I'll ask you how long you can abide your own filth:
I've kept myself pure and noble, and I know."

Our faces changed in silence: I grimaced as he had;
Goucher, having made his point, was calm.

"You think a revolution waits
for your desire, on your content
in much pored-over justice, efficiency of man
to raise the deservedly happiest to happiness? Victimized ego
are the axes of the guillotine; you tinker with a gilded knot,
the people break it, and slam you against the high stone walls
when they charge. Master, I've found materialists
debating for hours about words. But wait till they raise
their corn and grain,
using corpses for counter-weights, or anything
they lay their hands on to equalize distribution.
That's right for you. You've never faced
a working truth: it's dirty as war,
muddied o'er with killings. Intelligence
is limited like a stiletto, and in large times
there's need for broadsword-sweeps."

The lamp's rays were burying themselves in Goucher's bald spot,
his lips shifted out of decisiveness, his gaze appeared friendly.
I knew that he was through. I left, through doors
which floated toward me, down stairs too quickly receptive
to my step. The room no more contained us—both alone—
Goucher thinking, and I, like Goucher, growing old.

FRANK MERCHANT

# *Decision Were Panacea*

We, the deflated ones, know that no clutch
Of unleafed branches will enclose the clouds
We need, not knowing:
for in clouds, some say,
There broods a laughter and that untimed crumbling,
All, to the incoherent fog within our trunks.

Wherefore this declamation? What are these birds
Which quite outwing concatenating wants?
Which way this ululation picking at our veins?
This chain cries down the freedom we have dreamed
And turns us numb with our too quick decrease.
These substitutions tacking down our time
(Sir, you say their heads are fourteen carat . . . well?),
Grand rapids bureaus when some sense was set
On studded chests from Ophir, habitant
In purplestudded passages the mind rejects.

In short, it is to dream that we are set
For only dreaming catches us in snares.
Now listen nicely: the dream is that pink foetus
Which someday will slip out pervasive pain.
To be a robot clicking over roads,
Aloof, with the efficiency of gears,
To be unfrayed by twang neurotic years
Which jitter through the matter, which evoke
The pointless dark of one whose mind was crunched
To tread these corridors we trod for years. . .

*O lente, lente currite, noctis equi!*
The stars still move, time runs, the clock will strike
And these,
the concentrations of our slick peripheries,
Will close upon us,
still without the point.

# *Of One in a Dark, Dark Place*

These tears, these tears for God, the World, for me?
Perhaps I never plunge beyond the self.
Ambiguous is but a face put on
By one anomalous and desperate.
This manhood, it is not of flesh and bone;
This muscle, it is not the measure of
Their innate song relating every note.
*Come, cry with me*—bombast and turpitude
Are essenced in an hole where antiphone
Dissenting prelates droning of some rood,
Some iron casket I, unworthy, hate.
(These swelling tags come much too easily
To plead a plumbing of essential self.)
What is the world that one should pull down that
Which is integral I?
The world is wrong? an iron clock that ticks
Upon macadam wastes where iron tracks
Observe and shun the blazoned click of time:
Or, this which I call me,
Which interrupts inditing timeless rhyme,
Is crooked, where the communal straight lines
Diverge, impinge, but have no need to cry.
This is I.
Take up some cross: this concupiscent self
Is without gold or cure.
Die, and a wave of silence sweeps you by
The straight lines never billowing nor suffused
With mergency, with pain, with a remorse.

HOWARD BLAKE

## *Unemployed*

This breathes (the reflex, the solemn irony):
    the tool was trimmed
To one edge and use (tool without task is for
    the moment dead).
The man is in himself, the seed rattles in the
    house unbroken.

This was a column revolving on the axis of a
    task.
Halt was in midturn, earth struck the sun at
    solstice:
This is a man moveless at the source, stunned
    on the burned axis.

Nothing is changed:
    stars traverse the upper, the darker, tideless sea,
    their lights shaken, unreal, in the simpler waters;
    this absorbs air, flesh, plant, walks at intervals;
    heart compounds the formula precise, five antennae
    open; nerves, the filigree alert, receive the wave.

And all is changed:
    this is a circle closed, nor exist stars grass wind
        nor light is flowing;
    the formula the bone the filigree spin in their own
        weight;
    this is a knot in the iron web—solely coil exists,
        solely stress.

Life was in the first seas, continued airward,
    slid the earlier rock.
Afterward: wings, the flying, unwound lengths,
    the stolid feet.
Later the cities—men and their sustenance—
    the girt planet.

# SMOKE

This was a point in the line of motion, a man
    continuous.
The continuity is cut, the point in motion is
    unbound:
Time howls in the ear of the figure, as space
    blinds the polyp alone.
This is man trimmed to one edge and use, this
    (for the moment)
                the consummation of the seas.

DON GORDON

# *Exile*

Cathedrals pierce the city trees
Below the statue of the king;
Bronze Louis rears his charger, sees
Walls foaming with the orchard-spring.

This holy knight through icy rain
Beheld waifs at the locked gates bulge,
Heard bells, above a brazen plain
Tolling the death flesh must divulge.

Yet living brows like this, serene,
Ignore such autumn in the bud,
With blossoms of a changing scene,
Wreathe bright the hair and flaunt the blood.

One may be wrong, for sullen crop,
To sow his travels in the sand,
And still with friends and beauty stop
A stranger in a foreign land.

LINCOLN FITZELL

# *Indian Summer*

Rumors of heaven, lost, regained, restored
Are on the air today quickening and delaying
The blood's pulse, and the heart's tremor
Where once Corinna had gone out a maying
Her apron full of blossoms of celestial color,
The rich, tart, apples rosy and sharp to taste,
Fall on the withering grass in profuse haste
A delectable squandering, a precious waste.

Now the cool blossoms have the sheen of metal,
The warmth, the silken texture stiffens and hardens
And silver light veins each imperturbable petal,
You too Corinna have grown silent and whiter,
No longer on light grass your swift feet tarry
Breaking the pauses with a wild rose laughter,
The sun at your shoulder, bright clouds speeding after.

And all the heavens are pale, and thin-veined blue,
Struggles through escaping light too timidly,
The message runs in signals through the door,
Of each time-silenced house, the window panes,
Reflect the burden of the wind's descent.
What mighty messenger, sky-shadowed, lightning sent
Runs in cold daylight through leaf-scattered lanes,
Murmuring of falling leaves, sky's discontent?

MARYA ZATURENSKA

# *Two Poems*

I

Dun me no more; the debt is paid
Longstanding though it was,
In their graves my fathers sleep
Burnt their references.

First and last am I in one
The parent and the child,
What he began is finished here
Creation reconciled.

My root! my sire! saw you as I?
The end, as I the start?
The ring of Heaven looses him
To chant the higher part.

II

The struggling spirit frees
Wound in its cloth of flesh
It rises, yet called back,
Reluctant; not to leave
But to leave behind
The body, that delivered
Fragile though it had been
The soul up to this height.
Who's is the voice, thrilling the spirit?
The voice of God, calling
His chosen to himself.
Goodbye regret, goodbye cover—
In a half-thought—and it goes
Slipping the ropes of breath.

Osmond Beckwith

# *View From the Cliff*

A stolid pine. . .

(We grope, we plan a green future, childlike
And trusting, men looking into the sea,
Imagining the bottom. I had not thought
Those were his bones: they look so like coral.
Such a divine tone. No, I can't believe it.

They saw him from the boat. You must believe
The word of holy men.

But you, who stand beside me. . .

I have destroyed and lost all that I knew
And laughed at what I had hoped for. Now
Is the desolate time and men have forgotten dreams.
We have omens. We have always had omens,
But portents are of little use. Kings vary.
We do not change.

I am not Leander. My city
Is away, long over this bitter water, rising
To heights undreamed since Babel. A king's son,
Waiting in the wind with a pine
Beside me, forcing my laughter at
The thought of variations.

The wind holds no harp now. A screech
Is here, coming
From Rhadamanthus' quean. Cry
With, into the gale.)

. . . bending toward the foam tips.

Alone and never free;
Free and never alone. Haunted.
Tell me, fool. . .
This Gyges, what has he witnessed
That he fears to remove his shield?

HARRY BROWN

# *The Fish Sonata*

Having banged the piano too hard
Traman turned and looked around
And seeing his friends assembled said
'To hell with that Almighty sound.

It is,' he said,—with something still
Resembling an enlarging air—
'My *Fish Sonata*: oversoul
Voyaging an underworld despair.

While less than panoramic zeal
Eliminated vaster plans,
I found myself intrigued between
The tadpoles and leviathans;—

Then plumped for giants. And you've heard:
A mackerel music round the whales.
There's nothing drier than dried fish.
Drink up, and I will practise scales.'

And Traman thereupon swung back
And found the keys as clean and fair;
And, thinking over what he'd said,
Wished his friends were really there.

WINFIELD TOWNLEY SCOTT

## *Faust When He Fell*

Faust when he fell lay on his face:
Nor litany nor violence could transcend
Magic's resolve, and pardon his disgrace,
Hands could not turn him over on his back.
Light had disowned him: abiding black
Skullcap of silence postured on his head.
It were a folly to believe him dead
And hear his soul go shuffling off to peace;
Daemons demur before they grant release
To surly men who hit a sordid pact
Only to lure what they have never lacked.
To hear him now, with beaks against the earth,
Robins could not shrill down that certain hate
Vibrant in passages the imps have built,
Miles under this world's sponge and sod and slate,
Moated with oceans of a stagnant silt.
Rust for the grief, loam for the lustful lips,
Filching less bread, more wine, another quilt,
And whetting soul, to die by fingertips.

WILLIAM FITZGERALD

# *Season's Greetings: S. B.*

That which the eyes have seen
recalls and comes again, like seasons
planting buds in the blood.
In me the flowering Spring
yields but the arid desert;
the green cactus towering above the rose!
The rose between the pages of a book—
a classic common way, yields not to me
an unforgotten fragrance, but the old worn
and yellow glaze of leaves which once were red
and lay violent upon the eyes.

Now comes the Spring, strident, rutting and proud!
full with the vigor of water rushing
down hills, plunging into valleys!
The suckling hills are giving up the snows
of winter's feeding.
                I have known the arid hills in the darkness
climbing near the desert where the rose
fell in the sudden shifts of wind, untouched
by hand, only the lips that spoke could tear
and sear like the sun: only water
calls on life in the dry desert, the rest is death
blooming like sage.

I am a dry man, the torrents poured
on a single rose
have left yellow petals in a book.

That which only eyes recall
ends with the season's madrigal

HARRY ROSKOLENKIER

# *Three Poems*

i

## *A True History of the Conquest of the Truth*

When I read by Doctor Hanns Sachs that Caliban was a fish
And that fish is the symbol of Amity Grotto
                Dewdrop Inn
                Love's Labour's Lipp'd,
Alors, my enfants, I looked up:
And there,
There,
Suddently, bejaysus, I seen Heaven delighting them cold rooks.

ii

## *They Call Muh 'Carpenter': A Love Poem*

Mole-skin Mole-skin where have you been?
I've been to Boston to see the Governor.

Tooth-skin Tooth-skin whujja do there?

She wrapped my blue scarf (J August, Cambridge)
About the electric light bulbs
Because I wanted (& God loquitur)
But not too much, enough to see only:

Scorch'd,
Never knew glass cd without breaking, but

4 bulbs pricking down from my ceiling,
Or as if a cow in the attic had got her udders stuck.

iii

*A Janissary on a Jaguary: Pure Poetry*

Matthew Mark & Colleen Bawn
Batter the bed that I lie on

14 Angels at my head
A drawn sword when I'm half dead

15 Devils at my feet
Quincy Christ my soul to meet

Newer arms and legs unknown
Crisper curls and hips of stone

Foggier head
fun-fevered brain

Give her the gun boys she's in pain

DUDLEY FITTS

# *To One Approaching*

The ears of the mountains swing down
for hearing of you in the wildest night
o softly flows the hum of your lips
and there is peace on the verge of chaos

It is so I have heard you
                but distantly
while the dry wagon wheels creaked
and there was nothing but the bones and hide
of a plodding team
                and the dusty way
we were going and that has been
these o many miles through the valley
shadowed and dead
                and the mountains
where you raced your beauty
beside the rich streams
miraged on the far world's curve

And now your voice is sweet in the foothills
the wind of refreshment
for the dried and parched skin
                and the team
is fat now from the high fodder
and eager for the climb to the taller places
where I may wash from myself
                (in the streams where you are)
the terror of the shadowed-valley crossing.

LAWRENCE A. HARPER

# Be in the Tight Earth Dust

Be in the tight earth dust and learn
The end of living is a stir
Of sand beneath the ocean surge,
A particle a wave can enter.
A hope up-crawling through the flower,
The frozen center of the blight,
The stem of dawn, the pliant sag
Of dark things toward the light.

Be in these their eternal need
And substance to the sloughed-off skin:
This is the source and end of living:
Conclusion where fiats begin.
Down in the damp lair of the dark
The penetrating light is warm
Loving the cold sleek bodies, loving
The aimless rot and swarm.

The sun can quicken these and you.
Be in the tight earth dust and learn
The end of living is an urge
To feed the sun, and burn.

DOROTHY COOPER

# *I Stand in Line*

Whitman, from you to Crane
the line was long
but at Camden or Vera Cruz, the loaf the same.
I join your line and no one asks my name
nor cares
but I must have my bread.
The ache of shoulders after sleepless nights
supports me, is the nail driven
supporting the labored jute of hunger's sack.
The mouth is open but the rigid back
is pride holding degradation to its task.

Slack mouth and empty sack, the aching back.
No Grecian urn to hold my bread
nor meadow lark beak crumbs from off my loaf,
the bridge is past, the grass lands gone,
blood flows toward the streets I walk upon.

Here where embattled futures barricade,
and pasts walk vigilant with gun and gas
to snipe
our best tomorrows on the run
or herd
them into stasis in stockade. . . .
Our songs where notes are minutes must be made

and though they atomize to backward air
it shall be breathed again by swift increase
of lungs that pant with battle-making peace
a living loaf
only dead now share.

From out the small songs like mine life shall sing
everywhere.

I write this standing in a line,
millions of men continuing my chest;
I say these words as I am marking time,
trying to say: "Look east, look west,"
trying to say to millions: "Stand abreast."

The throat of millions is my throat, and long
the inevitable throat that forms the final song.

WALKER WINSLOW

## *With No Deep Music*

In the time when accurate man has adjusted his great
capers beneath the hood of the universal and eternal
likely he can behold nasturtiums (maize, bronze, lemon)
as a little rust on the terrific fence of heaven.

This is a matter which strokes him to rest, and tunes
the concertina of his soul to gruff salutations; for
often flowers are pert things which merely quaver into
the competent time-exposure of the most serious and holy.

And so there is no weal at all in this facet turned
to the insipid eye: Ladders of fern descending toward
the cat couched impeccably there beyond the silver-
rainy light dripping along larch and waiting barrow;
with no sound, deep music, glamorous palaver even
to accompany the incalculable of this which only is
the mute moment's.

DAVID CORNEL DEJONG

# *Above Their Backs*

No, I was not with you, men, in the fields
When you laughed noisily amid the headless seed,
No, I was not with you when you cast upon the grates of greedy stoves
Shovelfuls of your brothers' days and nights;

No, I was not with you at the banquets where hunting scenes
Shone on the platters, while underneath the casements
The ebb of shadows dragged the starving like seaweed through the sands;
And when the dawn turned golden like a loaf in the poet's brain;

No, nor when you rummaged in the bowels of mountains,
Nor when you rippled the wine-circles in the great casks,
Nor when you opened my lungs like a purse and took the blood-money
With which I was paying my way in your musty offices.

No, I never stayed with you, gentlemen,
My regret hovering like a giant bat among the factories' high chimney-tops,
A cry shaken in its claws, a blade within the memory,
Light flashed from the water extinguishing sight.

And no more now, when you squirm upon your beds of ease,
Gentlemen, in the villages near the candles, in the capitols near the
big lamps,
Your voices slung about your necks like keys,
That tomorrow morning will open another order, other strong-boxes,

No more now, when memory pants,
And when like a lip, the knee is skinned on the common,
No more now when solitude clatters like a magpie in my heart,
Shall I be with you, men sleeping above skeletons of gold.

(*translated from the French of Ilarie Veronca*)

HAROLD ROSENBERG

ETHEL TURNER *Bat Out of America*
a new contributor, sends her poem from San Francisco, Cal.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS *To a Wood Thrush, Antique Engine*
is known to all readers of poetry.

FRANK MERCHANT *Monologue With Goucher*
is a former editor of *Smoke.*

ALBERT FRIEDMAN *Manhattan Ferry*
lives in Newark, N. J., and is new to *Smoke* readers.

HOWARD BLAKE *Of One in a Dark, Dark Place, Decision Were Panacea*
has a first book of verse soon to be published by Bruce Humphries.

HAROLD ROSENBERG *Above Their Backs*
is a frequent contributor to poetry magazines. The poem translated here is from the French of Ilarie Veronca, a young Roumanian poet.

LINCOLN FITZELL *Exile*
a Californian, appears often in the little magazines.

MARYA ZATURENSKA *Indian Summer*
has recently received the Shelley Memorial Award for her first book, *Threshold and Hearth.*

DON GORDON *Unemployed*
is another Californian who makes his first appearance in *Smoke.*

OSMOND BECKWITH *Two Poems*
was born in Ovid, Michigan, in 1913. This is his first published poetry.

HARRY BROWN *View from the Cliff*
has just won the Young Poet's Prize of *Poetry, a Magazine of Verse.*

DAVID CORNEL DEJONG *With No Deep Music*
is one of the editors of *Smoke.*

WILLIAM FITZGERALD *Faust When He Fell*
is one of the founders of *Anathema,* and has published a narrative poem *Daekargus.*

HARRY ROSKOLENKIER *Season's Greetings: S. B.*
has appeared in *Poetry, Scribner's.* and other magazines.

LAWRENCE A. HARPER *To One Approaching*
has contributed previously to *Smoke.*

WINFIELD TOWNLEY SCOTT *The Fish Sonata*
recently was awarded *The Guarantors Prize* given yearly by *Poetry.*

DUDLEY FITTS *Three Poems*
one of the better known American poets.

DOROTHY COOPER *Be in the Tight Earth Dust*
from Cincinnati, Ohio appears for the first time in SMOKE.

WALKER WINSLOW *I Stand in Line*
a frequent contributor to poetry magazines. At present he lives in Honolulu, T. H.